

REMARKS

Request for Reconsideration

Applicants have carefully considered the matters raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Office Action but remain of the position that patentable subject matter is present. Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration of the Examiner's position based on the attached replacement sheets, the amendments to the specification, the amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1 – 3 and 5 – 24 are pending. Claim 5 has been amended to add the limitations of claims 1 and 4, and claim 4 has been cancelled.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 3, 13 – 18, 23, and 24 stand rejected under 35 USC Section 112, 2nd Paragraph. The claims have been amended to obviate these rejections.

Prior Art Rejection

The Examiner objected to claims 5, 7 and 12 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, and indicated that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 5 has been so rewritten.

Claims 1 – 4, 6, 8 – 11, and 13 – 24 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Inoue. These rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites an annular groove whose generally curvilinear profile (as viewed along a radial plane) provides stress relief. As noted in the specification (see page 5, lines 1

- 4), this groove acts as a stress relief notch, which of course enhances the reliability and functioning of the device. Inoue shows no such annular groove, but instead seems to depict a bent metal plate whose flat sink and abrupt turns appear to be neither intended nor configured for providing the stress relief of the Applicants' claimed annular groove. As this claimed feature is missing from the reference, these rejections under 35 USC 102(b) are improper and it is respectfully asked that they be withdrawn.

IDS

Attached is a SB08A citing each of the References cited in the International Search and copies of each reference is provided with English Abstracts where available. The fee associated with this IDS is paid concurrently herewith.

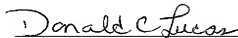
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Should any extensions of time or fees be necessary in order to maintain this Application in pending condition, appropriate requests are hereby made and authorization is given to debit Account # 02-2275.

Respectfully submitted,

LUCAS & MERCANTI, LLP

By:



Donald C. Lucas
Registration No. 31,275

LUCAS & MERCANTI, LLP
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016
Phone: 212-661-8000
Fax: 212-661-8002